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# News Release

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## **VA helps women Veteran entrepreneurs power up**

*Provides small businesses opportunity to directly pitch ideas to attain nationwide resources*

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the PenFed Foundation, helped three women-owned small businesses earn business development grants used to support their growing companies in the economic marketplace.

The recipients received a total of \$30,000 from participating in the Oct. 4 [Women Veteran GovCon Bootcamp Accelerator Pitch Competition](#).

The pitch competition was the conclusion of a series of business-development trainings co-hosted by the VA Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and the PenFed Foundation. Judges considered several criteria, including the value proposition of the pitch, if it offered a better solution than what is currently available on the market and how the grant might help winners scale and grow their businesses.

When asked about the program, recipients shared that they felt empowered, engaged and better prepared for the future of their business.

“This program was amazing because it taught me a lot about federal contracting,” said first place winner, Army Veteran and president of Abrado Analytics Lisa Van Wormer. “I thought I knew a lot about federal contracting because of my military service. However, this program taught me things I needed to know as a business owner. The program really helped me focus on the path I had to take to grow my company.”

Second place winner Veronica Lane, Navy Veteran and president of WJM Professional Services, has been in federal contracting for more than 27 years and recommends this program to any women Veteran-owned small business looking to expand their knowledge base. “Knowledge is power, knowledge is key,” she said. “You’re going to learn that the government contract landscape changes on a daily basis. You get a different experience through every program that you go through. Learn as much as you can and pursue your dreams.”

Finishing third was Liseth Velez, National Guard Veteran and president of LJV Development. She shared, “I had some experience with federal contracting, but this program went right to the nitty-gritty. I knew I was going to learn something that I could apply right away. The program provided me new information when compared to other federal contracting programs that I attended previously.”

The goal of the GovCon Bootcamp Accelerator program is to empower women Veteran entrepreneurs and improve women Veteran business owners’ well-being by getting them access to nationwide resources.

Learn more about PenFed Foundation’s [Veteran Entrepreneur Investment Program](#). The [Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization](#) has information about VA’s program to help women Veteran entrepreneurs achieve success and economic opportunities.

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